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STATEMENT

OF THE

OBJECTS AND THE RULES

OF THE

SOCIETY

FOR THE

EXTENSION OF DISPENSARIES

ON THE

SELF-SUPPORTING PRINCIPLE

THROUGHOUT THE KINGDOM.

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Established at Warwick, 10th July, 1858,  
In commemoration of the Queen's Visit to  
Warwickshire.

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Leamington :

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MDCCLVIII.

*It will have been thought by some that valuable time has been lost in not sooner appealing to the County for aid.*

*The delay has been necessary to enable the Committee to ascertain whether there was any desire for the aid of this Society;—and also to make the utility of the Society demonstrated by example.*

*This has been done as shown in the subjoined Statement; and the Committee having so strong a Guarantee of the necessity for, and the benefit of, this Society, do now confidently appeal to the Nobility, Clergy, and Gentry of the County for their support.*

IN COMMEMORATION OF  
THE QUEEN'S VISIT TO WARWICKSHIRE.

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At a Meeting held at the JUDGES' HOUSE, WARWICK, July 10th, 1858, convened for the Establishment of a Society for the Promotion of SELF-SUPPORTING DISPENSARIES, Patronized by the EARL OF WARWICK, LORD LEIGH, and LORD WILLOUGHBY DE BROKE,

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE LORD LEIGH,

IN THE CHAIR,

It was Proposed by C. H. Bracebridge, Esq., and Seconded by Lord Willoughby de Broke—and unanimously resolved, "That in commemoration of the recent visit of Her Majesty to this County, a Society be now formed for promoting the establishment of Royal Victoria, Self-supporting or Provident Dispensaries, in those Districts where the wealthy Inhabitants will subscribe towards the outfit, and the working people contribute towards their support."

It was proposed by Owen Pell, Esq., and Seconded by Chandos Wren Hoskyns, Esq.,—and unanimously resolved, "That a Committee be formed to obtain Subscriptions, prepare Rules and Regulations for

the management, and for carrying out the objects of this Society. And that such Committee consist of C. H. Bracebridge, Esq. ; Thomas Cotton, Esq. ; Rev. A. H. Roxburgh ; Rev. E. T. Smith ; Rev. Richard Morris ; Rev. H. W. Sitwell ; Rev. T. Hutton, Vice-President to the Northampton Dispensary and Chaplain to the County Gaol ; Rev. James T. Browne, Incumbent of St. Edmond's, Northampton ; Edward Bicknell, Esq., Senior Surgeon to the Provident Dispensary, Coventry ; Mr. Mc Veagh, Surgeon, Coventry ; Rev. W. L. Smith ; with power to add to their number." After which, Resolutions appointing the Officers of the Society were Proposed and Seconded by the High Sheriff ; Thomas Cotton, Esq. ; Edward Greaves, Esq., M.P. ; Richard Greaves, Esq. ; Robert Poole, Esq., &c.

#### Bankers.

MESSRS. GREAVES, GREENWAY, AND SMITH, WARWICK.

#### Financial Secretary.

MR. LAKE, SAVINGS BANK.

#### Honorary Secretary.

H. L. SMITH, ESQ., SOUTHAM.

## O B J E C T S .

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THE OBJECTS of this Society are to make known the superior advantages of the self-supporting system of Dispensaries, both as regards the true interests of the people, and the best interests of the medical profession ;—to facilitate the establishment of Dispensaries on this principle throughout the Kingdom, by furnishing information respecting the modes of proceeding, and by supplying all necessary forms, rules, and regulations for local purposes ;—to act as a Central Establishment, for general reference and assistance, for collecting data respecting the evil effects of indiscriminate charity, for obtaining and consolidating Reports, and Returns both statistical and scientific, from Local Dispensaries, for encouraging the conversion of existing forms of gratuitous medical aid into self-supporting Dispensaries, for promoting the establishment of Training Schools for nurses, and for insuring the fullest efficiency of all societies and plans tending to increase Provident Habits in relation to the before-mentioned matters ;—and to visit and report upon all Local Dispensaries or Societies established in connexion with this Society.



R U L E S .

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1. All Donors of *Five Guineas* shall be Life Governors, and all Subscribers of *Ten Shillings and Sixpence a year* shall be Members, and entitled to a Report when published.

2 The Subscriptions shall commence from the 1st of August, 1858.

3. A General Meeting of the Society shall be held annually on the the first Saturday in August, at three o'clock p.m., at the Judges' House, Warwick. A Report and Statement of the affairs of the Society, shall then be laid before the Meeting, and the Committee for the ensuing year be appointed.

4. Not less than *fourteen* days' notice of the Annual Meeting to be given by Circular to the Members.

5. The Committee of Management shall have the full control and expenditure of the funds of the Society and the direction of its operations.

6. The Committee shall arrange for the formation of Local Committees or Dispensaries, for obtaining full reports from them, and for extending to the Members of self-supporting Dispensaries the benefits of such of the existing Medical Institutions as are conducted on those principles.

7. The present Committee shall be C. H. Braccbridge, Esq.; Thomas Cotton, Esq.; Rev. A. H.

Roxburgh ; Rev. E. T. Smith ; Rev. Richard Morris ; Rev. H. W. Sitwell ; Rev. Thomas Hutton ; Rev. James T. Browne ; Edward Bicknell, Esq. ; Mr. Mc Veagh ; Rev. W. L. Smith ; Richard Greaves, Esq. ; Chandos Wren Hoskyns, Esq ; who have power to add to their number.

8. The Committee shall meet on the third Saturday in every month, at two o'clock, p.m., at the Judges' House, Warwick.

9. A Special Meeting of the Committee, or a Special General Meeting, may be called at any time by the Secretary, on the requisition of three Members of the Committee, by giving seven days' notice.

10. All business intended to be transacted at any Meeting of the Committee shall be named in the notice calling such Meeting.

11. A Quorum of the Committee shall consist of *Two*.

12. The Patrons, Treasurers, and Honorary Secretary shall be members of the Committee, *ex officio*.

13. The Secretary shall have the custody of the books and papers of the Society, and conduct the correspondence.

14. No alteration in, or addition to, these Rules shall be made except at a General Annual Meeting, nor without fourteen days' notice thereof being given, and the nature of the proposed alteration shall be stated in the notice.

## PROCEEDINGS.

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The Committee beg to call attention to the sub-joined Reports and Statements as being strongly indicative of the *necessity* for this Society, and of the great advantages to be derived from the adoption of the self-supporting principle.

A meeting of the members and friends of the COVENTRY PROVIDENT DISPENSARY, was held on Thursday, the 21st October, 1858, at St. Mary's Hall, for the purpose of showing the advantages of Institutions of this description, and of considering the best means of assisting the Society for promoting self-supporting Dispensaries. The Chair was taken by CHARLES DRESSER, Esq., Mayor of Coventry ; and among those present were C. H. BRACEBRIDGE, Esq., of Atherstone ; H. L. SMITH, Esq., of Southam ; A. B. HERBERT, Esq., C. BRAY, Esq., A. H. PEARS, Esq., J. BILL, Esq., W. SARGEANT, Esq., D. McVEAGH, Esq., E. WATERS, Esq., and other gentlemen.

The MAYOR, in opening the proceedings, said that the subject did not require many words from him. The object of the meeting was that those who had succeeded in establishing an Institution of this kind, should demonstrate their success in the resolutions that were to be proposed, and show to other people that the same thing could be carried out in other places as well as in Coventry. He then referred to Mr. Smith, of Southam, to whom the idea of Self-supporting Dispensaries first suggested itself, and remarked that all the honour of the success of these Dispensaries belonged of right to that gentleman, as, through evil report and good report, he had stuck



to the principle for which he had so long contended. The success of the Institution in Coventry, must be peculiarly gratifying to him, and he would, no doubt, be glad to see such Dispensaries established throughout the length and breadth of the land. The Mayor concluded by calling on Mr. Smith to read his address.

MR. H. L. SMITH, who was received with cheers, said—Mr. Mayor and Gentlemen,—The subject on which I have to speak is one on which I feel so strongly, that, lest I should be too discursive and tedious, I have judged it best to write out my observations, and so rigorously confine myself to what I deem absolutely necessary. More than a quarter of a century ago, a meeting was convened to consider the subject of providing medical aid for your working men and their families. It was found that the desire to preserve their freedom led some of them, rather than resort to the Parish Doctor for assistance, either to rely on the fallacies of quackery or die without any aid whatever. I remember some striking illustrations of suffering and patience were given by the gentlemen of your City, who were present at that meeting. I then earnestly recommended the plan that you have since followed with so much success. As you have for so many years had many practical proofs of the benefit that has accrued, it will be quite unnecessary for me to speak here, and in your presence, of the advantages of “*Self-supporting, Provident, Self-aiding, or Royal Victoria Dispensaries.*” The principle in all these is the same, by whatever name they may be called; and, even if this name be not in all respects literally true, it certainly is, so far as relates to the dispensing; and at the same time that it indicates the

peculiar principle and spirit, it is also suggestive of, and an incentive to, continued, and at last successful, efforts to make those Dispensaries wholly “self-supporting.” There is much in a name ; and surely *that* which expresses the best motives should have the preference. This diversity of names has led some persons to believe that these Institutions are different, and the confusion has been increased by the name being embraced where there was no Dispensary whatever, and where the *prospective feeling* which they are intended to create and foster was ignored and damaged by the sale of sick tickets, even to the most drunken and imprudent. About the time that your Dispensary was established, I had the pleasure of forming others at Derby and Burton-upon-Trent, and, if I may judge from their Reports, they have been as successful as your own. Another was established at Northampton thirteen years ago, on the occasion of Her Majesty’s visit to the Marquis of Exeter, when she passed through that ancient and loyal town. From the comparative unanimity of the inhabitants, and the business habits of the Managing Committee, that Institution has gone on very prosperously. There was some difficulty in the beginning, for many of the gentlemen who believed themselves best acquainted with the moral condition of the poor shoemakers, said it would be impossible to get 5s. a-year from them, they were so improvident and indifferent to their own welfare. Those prophets of evil were much mistaken. It has been found that the payments of those people have been yearly increasing, and last year amounted to £705—within about £40 of your own—and will, I

am told, quickly reach £1,000 per annum. The object in calling you together to-day, is not so much to increase the number of members in any one Dispensary, however desirable that may be, as to ask you *to aid in extending these Institutions throughout the kingdom.* During and after the establishment of these Institutions, others were founded in London and other places, which I had the principal part in initiating by freely publishing pamphlets and Reports, and making journeys to all parts of the kingdom, for a period of 36 years. Two Societies for carrying out this plan were established in London, principally at my expense. Both failed—one from the bitter hostility of a prejudiced medical press, and the other, which was commenced with a general Committee of upwards of 50 of the most eminent medical men in the metropolis, from the defalcation of the Secretary, and the failure of the British Bank. I confess myself to have “felt sick at heart with hope deferred.” I however struggled on and strove to be heard, though angry that not one of the thousands that were being benefited by my past labours, appeared to sympathise with me in the efforts that I had been making, and that not one of the Committee with the exception of the Surgeons of the one at Burton-upon-Trent, while they were sending me flattering Reports of their own local success, appeared to have the least notion that there were millions in the land—probably a third of the population of the kingdom—to whom Institutions of the like description would be a blessing, and that they were neglecting a privilege and duty by not working with me. When it was reported that the Queen was about to visit this County, to grace by her



presence the opening of the People's Park, at Birmingham, it occurred to me that if I could obtain the patronage and support of the estimable Lord-Lieutenant, it would be an excellent opportunity to establish a "Self-supporting Dispensary" at Warwick to commemorate the Queen's visit, in the same manner as the like event had been commemorated at Northampton. I addressed a letter to his Lordship, who quite approved of the suggestion, but expressed a desire that the question should be postponed till after her Majesty's visit. In the interval so much opposition was aroused by the misapprehensions of the officials of an old eleemosynary Dispensary, that I was advised not to alter anything until the two great agencies of evil, party and prejudice, had subsided; but so much of that good feeling was manifested which belongs to "that Shire which we the heart of England well may call" amongst some of the leading Noblemen and Gentlemen of the County (Lord Leigh more particularly), that I determined to appeal to them to become the heart and centre of a great national movement in behalf of these Dispensaries. Accordingly, we met on the 20th of July, and "*the Society for the Extension of Self-supporting Dispensaries, in commemoration of the Queen's visit,*" was the result, and from that time to the present, I have been continually employed in organising it, and in supplying different places, with Reports, rules, and regulations. But I am continually met by an evil, which I hope one effect of this meeting will be to abate. For instance, a meeting to confer on this subject was held at Warwick, when a private, if not an anonymous, letter from Coventry was



circulated, denying the truthfulness and validity of your Reports, and in many respects traducing the character of the Institution, and misrepresenting the motives and principles of its advocates. A Clergyman friendly to the new plan, could not obtain either a copy or a sight of the letter, so that he could give it no contradiction.

I had been previously served in the same unfair manner at a large meeting of medical men in London, when Sir Benjamin Brodie was in the Chair. A letter was delivered to and read by him—though the name of the writer was by request kept private—denouncing the Northampton Dispensary as conducted by a clique on behalf of a party. Why, gentlemen, you know that such statements are false. Disorders and disease are common to us all; and I belong to a profession that has to do with man in his humanity, and whether he be Jew, Turk, infidel, or heretic—high or low, broad or long, Whig, Tory, or Radical—if he be sick or maimed, we do not stop to enquire to what class he belongs. This sort of mean opposition still exists. An anonymous letter was published in the *Leamington Courier* last month, quoting the old calumny, that these Dispensaries were *a snare and a delusion*, upon which I challenged the anonymous writer to justify himself, and proposed to read the Reports and explain their right principle at Mr. Beck's rooms; but neither there, nor in any other public place the writer dared meet me. It has only been amongst such men as derive some unjust profits from the poor, and are self-seekers under the guise of charity, that I have been thus met. They appear to believe that their diploma gives them a vested interest in the sick-

ness of the poor, and that any change will destroy their profits.

But you must not suppose, gentlemen, that this feeling is general in the profession ; on the contrary, it has been principally by a full communication with some of the most eminent men in the kingdom, that I have been upheld in my long-continued strenuous exertions in this behalf ; and I beg to take this opportunity of stating, that I am most desirous of meeting my medical brethren to establish the following truths : that while “ *Self-supporting Dispensaries* ” are the most humane, patriotic, and Christian-like of medical charities, they are more profitable and honourable to the profession—more likely to promote sound medical ethics, and better calculated to advance sanitary science than any other. I mention these circumstances, to show the amount of interested prejudice and wilful misrepresentation which exists with respect to these Institutions. I am here, however, to-day, on behalf of the Warwickshire Society, *and to urge its claims upon you.* The object of the Society may be briefly stated to be the diffusion of information, the establishment of “ *Self-supporting Dispensaries,* ” and the binding them together in friendly union. This object is intended to be carried out by circulating tracts, reports, and addresses, and providing rules, regulations, and books for keeping accounts, publishing tables by which all the journals of disease may be kept on one formula common to all these Dispensaries. At present the Society is little more than a corresponding Society, calling attention to the subject and preparing for action. As Secretary, I am already in correspondence with Clergymen,

medical men, and others, in upwards of thirty places in the kingdom, where aid, assistance, or information is asked for. The Society is, in fact, now doing the silent work of preparation—the leaven has been thrown into the mass, and though as yet there be few outward indications, it is nevertheless working with certainty. The establishing of a Society like this, and bringing it properly into action, is attended with heavy expense in advertising, printing and correspondence—the funds are soon exhausted. In our case there has been a continued drain upon our resources, but we are free from debt, and intend to continue so. This is always the critical and trying stage of a Society. If it struggles through this, it rapidly strengthens and extends, and the light of its success is seen from afar. The Society has hitherto been supported by those Noblemen and Gentlemen who, actuated by philanthropic motives, have been won by argument or by actual experience of the good effect of these Dispensaries. To you, Mr. Mayor, and to your fellow-citizens, this Society now appeals; to that ancient and loyal City which first founded a “*Self-supporting or Provident Dispensary*,” this Society now comes in the first instance, and before seeking aid elsewhere. It asks for all the support—moral, pecuniary, and individual—which you are now in a position to give. It would be absurd to enlarge here upon its benefits;—by your published Reports you prove that you have achieved a most honourable success; but I may well say to you that, by reason of those benefits, and on account of that success, you ought to help in conferring the same benefits on others. You have discovered a great social good, by which the poor may



be benefited—one which will keep the heart of the sick alive with hope, and his brow from the shame of pauperism, and enable him to feel that he need be no more dependent on charity for medicine than for bread; and therefore I say that, on all moral, all social, and all Christian grounds, you are bound to help others. The torch which was lighted here twenty-six years ago you have no right to quench, but must send it on to lighten with its blessed light those towns where the poor are still wandering in the dangerous ways that lead to the Workhouse and the Gaol. *Some* by money, *others* by correspondence, and the free members themselves may assist in making known in other places the good they have actually experienced, by disseminating among their fellows at home, and in other towns, the knowledge of the existence and mode of managing these Institutions. By two or three going to any town where the Society is invited to send information, and there making this Dispensary known to the working people, and neutralizing the suspicions they might otherwise entertain, they would prepare the ground beforehand, and create an interest in the matter, which would probably lead to a visit from the Secretary or a deputation of the Society, and would be a great help towards the establishment of a Dispensary. The Society would of course be glad to pay the expenses of these free members whilst so engaged. The Committee-men and authorities might do much as individuals by their personal influence, by furnishing testimonials and letters of introduction, which would prevent great waste of time in obtaining the connexion necessary for calling a public meeting in towns at a distance.



You, Mr. Mayor, yourself, as the chief civic authority, having witnessed the practical working of these Institutions, the principle of which has been approved by the Lord-Lieutenant, the High Sheriff, the Bishop of the Diocese, the Patron of the Dispensary, and the Archdeacon, who is one of your Vice-Presidents, might give a testimonial or certificate of your approval, which would be of the greatest possible value in opening correspondence, and making arrangements with the Mayors of other cities or boroughs. By these means you may assist in extending these Dispensaries, and making them a perpetual blessing to tens and hundreds of thousands. But besides this, you may, many of you, contribute to the funds of the Society. If the free members cannot do so individually, they may collectively through the Dispensary, and I already perceive the way of repaying them a hundredfold. The foundation of the building which I ask you to assist in erecting, was laid here thirty years ago, and at my expense. Of those whom I then addressed, I do not now see one before me—all gone—probably, dead; and now I again stand here, an older man, but with no change in my opinion, except a deeper conviction of its usefulness and blessedness. Since that time, Science has done marvels—the telegraph and the railway, from being mere romances, have become facts, and have changed the face of the earth and the habits of nations. One thing has abided unchanged, and that is the obligation of doing good to our fellows—of doing to them as we would be done unto. This is the subtle essence of all laws and of all society;—evil men may doubt it, thoughtless men may rail against it, but it is the one abiding truth of a Christian's social life.

It is the duty of each and of all to clear away all things which hurt or offend,—to bring together as members of one family all the severed and contending elements of society,—to alleviate pain, to soften distress,—and to edify and build up a strong, independent self-sustaining spirit in the hearts of the humblest and lowliest of our fellow-subjects, and thus make them loyal and faithful to the Queen and country, if evil days should come. The Institutions I have advocated will be great and valuable helpers in this work—they will do more than this, for they will not only be precursors of loyalty and patriotism, but they will be gatherers of many into the Christian fold, and by assisting in their establishment you are rendering honour to your Queen, and doing a good service unto God and the Father of all men.

C. H. BRACEBRIDGE, Esq., proposed the following resolution.—“ *The benefits that have accrued to the working classes of the City of Coventry from the establishment of the Provident Dispensary are so numerous, that this meeting recommends the establishment of similar Institutions throughout the kingdom.*” Besides the provident habits, Mr. Bracebridge observed, which this institution introduced into the mind of the working man, it also did a great deal of good in another direction ;—it furnished reliable statistics of disease, and also very valuable information as to the locality of disease. He proceeded to give an interesting account of a visit to the Registrar-General’s Office, in Somerset House, and passed on to observe that, if the Legislature thought it important to pass Acts of Parliament in order to afford the working classes facilities for saving money by the establishment of Clubs and

Savings' Banks, he thought it was more particularly incumbent on the Government to endeavour to guard the public health by legislating for the extension of Institutions such as these. Mr. Bracebridge proceeded further to dwell on the innumerable benefits such Institutions as the Coventry Dispensary must be the means of conferring on the working man. It not only provided him with the same skilful care and attention as the rich when laid on the bed of sickness and suffering, but it also prevented him from injuring his constitution, by flying in the moment of illness to unskilful and unqualified persons. He believed such Institutions, instead of being detrimental to the interests of the properly-qualified medical man, tended to promote them, and establish them amongst the people.

A. H. PEARS, Esq., seconded the resolution. He was one of those whom Mr. Smith addressed on the formation of the Coventry Provident Dispensary, 26 years ago, and he could bear testimony to the excellent working of the Institution during that long period. He regretted that the principle of these Dispensaries had been attacked in the manner mentioned by Mr. Smith. If the communications to which that gentleman had referred had been open and straightforward, the Committee might have replied to them; but as they were anonymous, he would recommend that they should be treated with the contempt they merited.

The resolution was carried unanimously.

A. B. HERBERT, Esq., moved the next resolution : —“ *A Society having been formed at Warwick for the purpose of spreading information respecting Provident Dispensaries, and for promoting their establishment,*



*the honorary subscribers and free members of the Coventry Dispensary are earnestly requested to give that Society their support."* In enforcing the resolution, Mr. Herbert said, that though he could not boast of being one of the founders of the Provident Dispensary, he perfectly recollected that his late father estranged some of his best friends by affording his support to the Institution; but he was happy to say that his father lived to see the prejudice gradually die away, and to know the gentlemen who had at one time quarrelled with his views on the subject, as his friends again. His (Mr. Herbert's) own experience had convinced him that the advantages bestowed on the poor by Provident Dispensaries were intimately connected with their welfare, and he had, therefore, great pleasure in supporting the resolution.

Mr. TOWNSHEND seconded the resolution in a brief and pointed speech, in the course of which, he observed that he did not believe the small attendance of working men on that occasion arose from the want of feeling much interest in the object. He would not for a moment believe that the working people of Coventry, who had derived so much benefit from this Institution, would have any other wish than to give their hearty support to this Institution, and he attributed the small attendance on that occasion to circumstances over which they had no control.

C. BRAY, Esq. said, they had not met to recognise the advantages of the Provident Dispensary in their own town, for 25 years' practice had made them sufficiently well known in Coventry; but they had met to bear testimony in favour of such Institutions



for the benefit of the country at large. He therefore begged to propose “*That a report of this meeting, with Mr. Smith’s address, the testimonials of the medical men, and the resolutions now formed, be published in the following papers:—The Medical Times, The British Association Journal, and The Morning Post.*” He said that he had been connected with the Provident Dispensary for the last 25 years, and when it was yet in its infancy it was threatened with a danger similar to that which had proved fatal to one of the Metropolitan Institutions referred to in Mr. Smith’s address. One of their Officers became a defaulter, but they had been prudent enough to require him to give security. He (Mr. Bray), unfortunately for himself, happened to be that security, and he had to pay nearly £100, the amount of the defalcations. They would thus see that he had suffered in the cause. He believed, nay he knew from practical experience, that the prejudice against Provident Dispensaries was ill founded, for they in no way interfered with the regular practice of medical men, while they afforded assistance to a class of industrious and provident persons, who would otherwise be driven to the necessity of seeking parochial aid, or going without medical advice altogether. It was specially necessary that the poor should have duly qualified practitioners to attend them, for the most extraordinary notions sometimes prevailed among them with regard to disease. “*Rising of the lights*” was a complaint that the uninformed imagined was very prevalent, and he had also heard of some strange disorder called “*confloption of the liver.*” When people fancied they were suffering from “*rising of the lights,*” they took shot to keep

them down—(laughter)—in other cases they imagined that they had only to take *something*, it did not much matter what, in order to get well again ; and if nature cured them the credit was given to drugs which were often as likely to retard as to promote a cure. A Provident Dispensary was calculated to be of great benefit to such a class of persons, because by providing them with medical assistance of the best kind, it prevented ignorant tampering with their constitutions. Mr. Bracebridge had made some interesting remarks with reference to the office of the Registrar-General and the science of statistics. Now he took it that the object of all science was to anticipate events, and statistics not only gave the proportion of deaths to the population, but also gave the number of cases of sickness for every death. This science was thus of great use in the establishment of Provident Dispensaries, because it enabled the working man to assure for medical assistance in case of sickness, just as he could assure for a certain sum of money in the event of death. Every prudent man would endeavour to anticipate calamities like sickness and death ; and now almost every accident in life might be provided against. He might add to the remark that the object of all science was to anticipate events, the truth that wisdom always adapted means to an end. Now in the case of medical charities generally, there was the element of contingency ; it was a chance whether they would or would not afford the required relief, and therefore there could be no adaptation. It was the truest charity and the truest wisdom to establish a Dispensary which should be self-supporting, and

should enable its members to reckon with certainty on medical assistance in the hour of distress.

D. McVEAGH, Esq., in seconding the resolution, remarked that the Provident Dispensary was very often of the greatest possible benefit to poor persons, who but for the assistance it afforded would either have to dispense with medical aid altogether, or be driven to the humiliating necessity of seeking it at the hands of the parish officers. It was a mistake to suppose that persons were admitted as members of the Dispensary whose means would enable them to pay a medical man for attending them. At their monthly meeting the admission book was most carefully con-  
 ned over, and persons were not allowed to become members unless there was good ground for believing that they could not otherwise afford to obtain medical assistance. Mr. McVeagh then highly complimented Mr. Smith for his disinterested and valuable exertions on behalf of Institutions of this description, and concluded by reading the following testimonial, which was signed by himself and the other Medical Officers of the Coventry Provident Dispensary :—

*“ We, the undersigned Medical Officers of the Coventry Provident Dispensary, desire publicly to express our high sense of the self-supporting principle as applied to the wants of the working classes in sickness. We earnestly and confidently recommend this invaluable system to the serious notice of our medical brethren throughout the country. Wherever it is properly established, it thrives—it must thrive, for it regards the best interests, both of the working classes and the profession; of the former, because it is a great saving of expense, and obviates the temptation to run into debt or into the*



*humiliating alternative of seeking gratuitous medical aid. Moreover, it is a provision against their falling into the hands of ignorant and unqualified persons. It raises the status of our profession by abolishing the sale of drugs and lapsing the private Club practice into a public Institution. The fact of the Medical Officers having private practices of their own, ought to be a sufficient argument against the accusation that ineligible persons are admitted to benefit. The free members comprise Clubs, and those who else would resort to the Union or gratuitous advice. Every practitioner must confess that this latter system is open to great imposition, and that at the present day in our cities and towns it is quite uncalled for, except at the Dispensaries attached to our public Hospitals.*

*“Provident or Self-Supporting Dispensaries are a direct source of emolument to the surgeon in proportion to the zeal and ability he displays in the exercise of his duties. They command extensive fields for practical experience—the only true road to public success; they lighten the work for our underpaid Union surgeons, by enrolling many who would otherwise have to resort to the parish; they calmly challenge any valid objection on the part of the public or the profession.*

(Signed) “EDWARD BICKNELL, M.R.C.S., L A.C.

“DENIS McVEAGH, L.F.P.S.G.

“EDMOND WATERS, M.R.C.S.L.”

The resolutions were then put and carried unanimously.

J. BILL, Esq., then moved the fourth resolution, which was as follows:—“*The Committee of the Coventry Provident Dispensary are desirous upon this occa-*



*sion, to move a vote of thanks to Mr. Smith, the promoter of a system which has been productive of so much benefit to the working classes of this City. They feel deeply indebted to him for his exertions here, and most heartily wish him success in his praiseworthy and persevering endeavours to multiply such valuable Institutions."* He felt it his duty to support the establishment of Provident Dispensaries, not only because he believed they were calculated to benefit the working classes, but because they were based on the great principle of self-support. When so great a benefit as was conferred by these Institutions on the poor, could be accomplished on the principle of self-support, and on the principles of moral progress and general advancement in the scale of society, he thought it was their duty as Christian men to give it their most earnest and cordial support; he believed that as the moral and social progress of the working classes was extended, so also was the well-being and happiness of the whole country. The efforts of Mr. Smith to establish these Institutions were at first received with great opposition, and they had very undeservedly and wrongly been much calumniated, but their value was now becoming fully recognized, not only by the working classes for whose benefit they were designed, but also by persons in the highest walks of life, who rightly esteemed them to be a great means to a great end. Every great and lasting benefit conferred on the country had in the first onset, like the Provident Dispensary, met with more or less opposition. It was the case when Howard introduced his new principle of Prison discipline; when Rowland Hill suggested the system of penny postage; and numerous other instances might be mentioned; but they had ultimately borne down all prejudice be-

fore them, and were now conferring an incalculable amount of benefit on the people. Those were the men who, like Mr. Smith, had come out from the great mass of the world, and through evil report and good report had maintained with heroic determination what they believed to be a good thing until its value was fully recognised, or until they had brought it to a successful issue. He should be sorry to be guilty of such a violation of good taste as to pass eulogiums where they were undeserved ; but the services of Mr. Smith had rendered to the poor by the establishment of Provident Dispensaries, entitled him to the warmest gratitude of all classes.

The Resolution was carried by acclamation.

Mr. KINDER seconded the resolution, and in doing so bore testimony to the benefits which the Coventry Dispensary had conferred on himself and his family.

H. L. SMITH, Esq., in responding, observed that these Institutions were doing a great work in Society by helping to fill up the gulf that separated rich and poor, and which, if not filled up, would grow gradually wider. These Institutions appealed to the affections of the people, and proved to them that if they had not wealth in common with the rich, the rich had, at least, hearts in common with the poor. Every human being in a nation belonged to a vast machine, no part of which could be injured without the whole being more or less affected ; and as establishments having for their object the alleviation of suffering, the promotion of good will, and at the same time the preservation of independence were calculated to do a great social good, they were worthy of the most hearty support of all.

An unanimous vote of thanks having been awarded to the Mayor, for his kindness in presiding over the meeting, the proceedings terminated.

Mr. LUKE DRESSER, the Honorary Secretary to the Coventry Provident Dispensary, states that it was established in 1831, the principal persons taking an active part in its formation being the Rev. Dr Hook, the late Mr. Richard Bury, the late Mr. Wilmot, the late Mr. A. Herbert, Mr. George Eld, Mr. Joseph Cash, and other gentlemen. The Free Members pay one penny per week each; but three-pence a family includes all under 17 years of age. The amount so received is called the Free Fund, and is divided into three parts—one part is carried to the Honorary Fund, and two parts are divided amongst the Surgeons. The Honorary Fund is supplied by the payment from the Free Fund and by the honorary subscriptions. Out of this fund all the expenses of the Institution are paid, including drugs; thus, it will be seen, the Surgeons have no interest in not giving expensive medicine. On the establishment of the Institution it was expected that an honorary subscription of £200 would suffice for the wants of 2,500 members. In the twenty-seventh year of the existence of the Institution, honorary subscriptions to the amount of £66 were found quite sufficient for the support of the Institution, which then numbered 5,000 members. In 1857 the honorary subscriptions amounted to £66 15s. 6d., and the contributions of free members to £749 3s. 6d. The sum of £491 18s. 1d. was paid to the Surgeons, and the cost of drugs was £151 1s. 1d.



At a MEETING held in NORTHWICH, (Cheshire) on the 28th of October :—SIR PORCHER TOWNSHEND, Esq., in the Chair, the following Resolutions were adopted :—

1st. Proposed by GEOFFERY SHAKERLEY, Esq., and Seconded by J. TOMKINSON, Esq.—

That the establishment of a Provident, or, Self-supporting Dispensary for the Working Classes of this Town, would be productive of great benefit, and would, by promoting provident habits, and a spirit of self-dependence in those for whom it is designed, and by encouraging friendly intercourse between them, and their more wealthy brethren, lead to general, social, moral, and religious improvement.

2nd. Moved by Rev. THOMAS FRANCE, Seconded by Rev. S. H. COOKE.—

That a Committee with power to add to their number, be formed for the purpose of establishing a Provident or, Self-supporting Dispensary for this Town, (including an area of three miles from the Dispensary), and for procuring contributions and subscriptions for the outfit and annual household expenses.—The Free Members' Fund properly belonging to the Drugs and payment of medical men, and so far being truly Self-supporting, tho' not Self-creative, or Self-generative.

3rd. Moved by J. H. HARPER, Esq., Seconded by THOMAS H. MARSHALL, Esq.—

Mr. H. L. SMITH, Honorary Secretary of the Society, formed at Warwick, for the Extension of Self-supporting Dispensaries, having on behalf of that

Society offered to present to this Dispensary, when established, a complete set of the Books required for keeping the Accounts, &c.:—that the thanks of this Meeting are hereby given to that Society, for their valuable gift,—and that the Committee be recommended to establish the Dispensary in connexion with the “Warwick Extension Society.”

4th. Moved by Rev. G. GIBBONS, Seconded by C. H. HOLLAND, Esq.—

That the President of the Northwich Provident Dispensary be requested to transmit a copy of the foregoing Resolutions to each of the Noblemen, Patrons of the Warwick Society—congratulating them upon their mode of commemorating the Visit of the Queen to the County of Warwick, as evidently calculated to extend throughout the kingdom, the feeling of Patriotism and Loyalty, by which they were actuated by promoting comfort and assistance to Her Majesty’s poorer subjects.

The following testimonial has been given by the medical men of Derby :—

We, the undersigned Medical Officers of the Derby Self-supporting or Provident Dispensary are unanimously of opinion that for the last thirty years, during which it has been established, it has been of great benefit to the poor and working classes of this large and rapidly increasing town ; and that especially since the year 1844,—when it became disunited from a charity class with which it had been previously connected,—it has been of inestimable value to those persons for whose benefit it was established.

The undersigned further state that the benefits which it confers on the poor and working classes, have been secured without injury to the Medical profession, which from its peculiar constitution it protects as much as possible.

ROBERT HAMILTON, M.R.C.T.

J. WRIGHT BAKER, M.R.C.K., L.S.A.

JOHN CLARK, M.R.C.S., L.S.A.

GEORGE TAYLOR, M.R.C.S., L.L.A.

H. F. GISBORNE, M.R.C.S.

J. W. JOHNSON, M.D., M.K.G.K.

JOHN JONES, M.R.C.S.

A. G. GREAVES, L.S.A.

John Becke, Esq., of Northampton, who has for 13 years been the Honorary Secretary of the Northampton Royal Victoria Dispensary, has recently printed, for private circulation, "A Sketch of the Facts connected with the Establishment of the Royal Victoria Dispensary, at Northampton;" and has kindly presented to the Committee *fifty* copies. Mr. Becke says—

"In conclusion, I cannot too strongly urge the  
 "claims of these Institutions on the Clergy, and those  
 "who have the best interests of the poor at heart. By  
 "means of Provident Dispensaries, the best medical  
 "aid can be obtained for the poor, without any con-  
 "siderable outlay on the part of the rich, and without  
 "calling on the medical men to sacrifice their time,  
 "without any reward. The system of making the Free



“Members contribute, encourages in them habits of  
“providence and forethought, and raises a feeling of  
“independence, whilst, at the same time, they feel they  
“have the assistance and support of their more fortunate and highly-favoured brethren.”

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*The first year's Report will be presented to the  
Subscribers at the General Meeting in August next.  
It will contain an account of the proceedings of the  
Committee—further evidence and Testimonials in favor  
of the Institution—and a List of Donors and Sub-  
scribers.*

*Judges' House, Warwick,*

*November, 1858.*

LEAMINGTON:

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MDCCCLVIII.